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ANATOMY

THREATENED WITH

EXCOMMUNICATION:

OR,

A TRUE AND FAITHFUL ACCOUNT

OF A RECENT

BLOODY BATTLE.

A HUDIBRASTIC POEM.

Sensu enim animo, fit ille quasi natus non esset omnino.

CICERO in *Anic.* 4.

Ridet hominum vanam de sepultura sollicitudinem.

Argument in lib. 3. LUCRET.

'Tis an ill bird that defiles its own nest. *Collect. of old Sayings.*

The members once rose up against the belly, and refused to nourish it, &c. *Esop's Fables.*

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ANATOMY

THREATENED WITH

EXCOMMUNICATION.

ARIST, good Muse!—I sing of war,
A theme 'twould be a sin to mar :
Then grant me such divine assistance,
That what I sing, shall make a beast dance.

O 'tis a glorious thing to die
In the service of one's Country !
'To see the laurels of the brave
Luxuriant o'er the hero's grave !
'Tis glorious enough, to lose
An arm or leg, an ear or nose,
When battling with right worthy foes ;—
Nay, were it known, to lose our toes
Would gain us more or less applause,
If lopp'd off in our Country's cause.
And 'tis of song, the noble mead
T' immortalize each noble deed :

To tell how heroes lost their breath,
 And gave a ghastly charm to death :
 How as the smoke of battle rose,
 Forth rush'd each squadron on their foes,
 And grinn'd and grappled with each other ;
 Making such hellish din and pother,
 That in the hurly-burly there,
 Each trembling coward lost his fear,
 And came out of the smoke and heat,
 A new-bak'd gazette candidate.

I sing of war,—but not the strife
 That robs the warrior of his life :
 'Tis not the clash of martial arms
 That every panting bosom warms.
 No danger's here, no sister—mother,
 Need dread the loss of son or brother.
 Death must hold essential place,
 But, ye might view him face to face,
 He ne'er will care a straw about ye,
 Ye ne'er will fall, though foes may rout ye.
 Small is, I ween, the Poet's mead
 Who sings of such ignoble deed ;—
 The strife of words—the war of tongues,—
 Paper battles—strength of lungs—
 Reports sent out to scare the nation,
 Stuff'd with base prevarication—
 Rewards proclaim'd for crimes, I wot
 Not yet committed, or forgot—
 Oh ! noble contest ! brave endeavour !
 What glory such a storm to weather !

To unpoetic minds, howe'er,
 I ought to make the subject clear ;
 And not sport in the poet's tandem,
 Driving my grey-goose-quill at random :
 Mind your five senses then, kind Reader,
 And listen to a special Pleader.

It seems, then, there has been a riot
 Rais'd by the Guardians of quiet ;
 A restless, bold, and doughty race,
 (But chief the under ones) who place
 Great consequence in reputation ;
 And this, in their official station,
 Rests they think on something new,
 Not form'd to please the learned few,
 But coin'd to bear such public int'rest,
 That all may talk, nor let their chin rest.
 Of late, for want of better matter,
 Officious tongues began to chatter
 Of College cruelties, in stealing
 Bodies, that students th' art of healing
 Might learn from actual dissection,
 And such a damnable inspection.
 Glad were some mighty men to find
 A subject suited to their mind,
 So on th' Anatomists pell-mell
 Th' officious peace-disturbers fell,
 And sent them all, poor deils, to hell !
 " What butchers !" cried each would-be sage,
 " What stains to so refin'd an age !

“ What !—plunge into its narrow home,
 “ And tear the body from the tomb,
 “ Ere yet, perchance, the parent’s cries,
 “ The orphan’s, or the widow’s sighs,
 “ Have measur’d out the first lone night,
 “ And wail’d the ’parted spirit’s flight ?
 “ Inhuman butchers ! a murrain seize ye ;
 “ Will nothing but dead bodies please ye ?
 “ How would ye like to be so cookit
 “ When you yourselves have kick’d the bucket ?
 “ What though Albinus, and some more
 “ Of bloody fame, in days of yore,
 “ Spar’d nor sex nor age, but wrought
 “ Their cursed work, and cut, and sought,
 “ With devilish eye, for nerves and veins ;
 “ Would they had chok’d them for their pains !
 “ Must ye, forsooth, too give a sample,
 “ And set the world a vile example ?
 “ Cannot the many works content ye,
 “ From age to age by sinners sent ye ?
 “ Who are your patrons, miscreants ?—Know
 “ That WE your eminence bestow :
 “ And farther, know that we’ll direct
 “ Your mode of making students perfect.
 “ Must WE not know, who are your *masters*,
 “ How to make best e’en salves and plasters ?
 “ Obedience is *your* duty :—blind :
 “ Trust to each superior mind,
 “ That forms the source of all your power
 “ Of science and of art the flower.”

So spoke the men in office.—Pride
 Diffus'd the order far and wide :
 Proclaim'd their tenderness of heart
 In taking the poor corpse's part.
 (For yet, the *people* thought on this, less
 Than on any other business.)
 Oh ! it was int'resting to feel
 Affection for the public weal !
 Their gentle feelings could not bear
 Such dreadful, sick'ning tales to hear,
 As lumps of clay that late enshrin'd
 Perchance an amiable mind,
 Being carried through the *crowded* street
 Envelop'd in a snow-white sheet ; *
 And ta'en (not *vi et armis*.) where
 The damn'd ones haunt in street or square,
 But openly ;—which show'd, alas !
 The crime was brought to such a pass,
 That those concern'd, in thirst for gain,
 No longer car'd for gods or men.
 “ To arms !” the foe then loudly cried ;
 “ See human decency defied !
 “ The rabble *now* don't care about it,
 “ But soon, let none presume to doubt it,
 “ Such an uproar shall be rais'd,
 “ That all the world shall be amaz'd

* This alludes to one of the stories industriously circulated, to
 rouse the indignation of the populace ; and which, being actually
 believed by certain active personages, did equal credit to their head
 and heart.

“ At our activity and spirit,—
 “ Such praise is the reward of merit.
 “ What ! shall we be to *brutes* so tender,
 “ And every gentle usage render,
 “ Because to triumph o’er the weak
 “ Is cruel,—and they cannot speak ;
 “ And all our tenderness conceal
 “ For the poor *corpse*, that cannot feel ?”

Meantime, the knights o’the scalpel glowr,
 And grumble at the meddling power,
 That from its ignorance alone
 Promis’d to spoil each Doctor’s gown ;
 And from its woful scarcity
 Of science, condemn’d Anatomy.
 They know, that nothing can avert
 The sudden whirlwind of a *desart*,
 But that sometimes it clears itself,
 So laid their anger on the shelf :
 And, shrugging up their shoulders, cried,
 “ If learning ’gainst such wind and tide
 “ Must strive awhile, ’twill not require
 “ A ruder gale—more deadly ire—
 “ Black rocks and sands it will not want,
 “ *Pour faire une naufrage excellentc.*”

Some few howe’er still dar’d to brave
 The danger of the riffled grave ;
 And plotting ’gainst the kirk-yard wardens,
 Pack’d off safely with their burdens.
 And since, with art most magical,
 To some good men most tragical,

To the students downright comical,
 To others diabolical,
 In spite of keeper, bolt and bar,
 'Two bodies prisoners of war
 Were made within the public poorhouse,
 And stolen:—value—not a louse:
 That is, t'the Town, but to the men
 Who still would bravely do't again,
 Some trifling guineas, more or less,
 According to the buyer's distress.
 But to the Professor,—none
 Could value thus the bodies won:
 For that which heaven-sprung science needs,
 To teach to man the glorious deeds
 Perform'd in favour of his race,
 Can, if the heart's in's proper place,
 Never too eagerly be sought,
 Too early found, too dearly bought.

But now the Foe grew downright mad
 That Science thus should take the lead,
 And though impeded on its way,
 Still in their faces win the day.
 So breathing vengeance, forth they fly,
 And ope' a golden battery;
 And dreadful punishments contrive
 For those that they might catch alive.
 In ebon letters large and long,
 A HUNDRED GUINEAS!!! draw the throng;
 A HUNDRED GUINEAS! for the man
 Who with the poorhouse treasures ran;

A HUNDRED GUINEAS ! is the mead
 For taking him, who took the dead !
 Such the reward for them that choose
 To second the enlighten'd views
 Of those, who seek to sink the College,
 And wish perhaps to share the pillage.

One of the persecuting tribe,
 Who thought the multitude to bribe,
 And crush at once the healing art,
 Took an exceeding active part.
 'Twas not so much ability
 As sickly sensibility,
 That like a maggot in a cheese,
 Ne'er let his neighbours rest at ease ;
 But with intentions bad or good,
 I' the way of every body stood ;
 Which all proceeded I suppose,
 (But *this*, no person rightly knows)
 Not from a vacuum in his sconce,
 But taking many things at once.
 Of all the things he held not right,
 Dissection mov'd his utmost spite :
 He thought the practice born of evil,
 And sent it fairly to the Devil.
 Whether he'd really power to send,
 We do not know, but apprehend
 He might himself have ta'en the charge,
 And given the whole account at large.
 Be this correct or not, his dread
 Of want of charity for the dead,

Has oft perplex'd his busy brain,
 And rack'd it with unfruitful pain.
 In such an hour, the hill was torn,
 And heav'd and groan'd!—the mouse was born!
 In such an hour,—a dreadful sight!
 Legions of boxes came to light.
 Prodigious!!—but their wond'rous power
 Excited admiration more.—
 This was their rise;—"I would seem the mind
 Of this good man, was not confin'd
 To things of every-day complexion,
 But often took a stray direction;
 And once it rush'd across his brain,
 That if the bones, that oft remain
 To bleach upon e'en holy ground,
 Were left the feeling eye to wound,
 They might perhaps a doubt excite
 As to the sacred book being right;
 Which says, that on the latter day
 We rise from all corruption free.
 Against such evil then to guard,
 The good man gave his solemn word,
 At least upon his box he put it,
 And in *plain English letters* wrote it;
 "The dead" (on that day Heaven be prais'd!)
 "Incorruptible are rais'd."
 Thus bidding us no longer doubt it,
 Since he has given his word about it.
 Whenever then a bone appears,
 A solemn face the good man wears,

And to his box of *uncorruption*,
 Consigns the offspring of corruption.
 So great his feeling is, that were
 The sexton to expose to air,
 In's daily task, a very stone
 Bearing resemblance to a bone,
 Straight to his box the mass he'd bear,
 And give the stranger welcome there.
 Such is the leader of the band ;
 The *feeling* bandit, whose command
 Would dash prosperity's cup down,
 And ruin all our fair renown.

What blessed changes such a storm,
 Such quick and *radical reform*,
 Will 'stablish in our far-fam'd College,
 Seat and emporium of knowledge !
 How will the neighbouring kingdoms stare,
 To hear our noble Patrons swear,
 Degrees are gain'd with half the labour,
 Than even those of special favour—
 That so acute is all our youth—
 And in this blessed country, truth
 Is found by such slight careless study,
 That now, we are not half so bloody,
 I'the school of med'cine as before,
 And shudder at the days of yore !
 Happy change !—the slight increase
 Of deaths need not disturb our peace ;
 Thousands a few, or more or less,
 Need never bring us much distress ;

Perhaps the climate is grown worse,
 Which surely is a serious curse :
 May be, that luxury has gain'd ground,
 And then the cause of death is found :
 At any rate, we've leave to kill,
 Failure it cannot be of skill.
 Whoever in a gunshot-wound,
 E'er talk'd of danger ! ask around—
 Vessels are never injur'd—nerves
 Are never harm'd—no *art*, preserves
 The hero's strength when life is fading,
 And all his dear-bought glory shading ;
 The merest peasant might afford
 All succour to the richest Lord.
 Ague may chill, and fever burn,
 But can a man, by study, turn
 The course of such unwelcome guest,
 Or drive away the deadly pest ?
 When rack'd and madden'd by the gout,
 Say, can he turn the devil out,
 By daily and unceasing toil,
 And wasting quarts of midnight oil ?
 Methinks I hear these *sages* cry,
 “ A curse upon Anatomy !
 “ What, in the name of Patience, can
 “ Be gain'd by cutting up a man ?
 “ The study of our noble frame,
 “ Has given, somehow, a lasting fame
 “ To several of the present age :
 “ When Barclay's name is on the page,

“ When Cooper, and Abernethy too,
 “ Rise in their dirty works to view,
 “ Their brother butchers all exclaim
 “ In admiration at their name.
 “ But how they can deserve such praise,
 “ Must every thinking mind amaze.
 “ That there are wonders behind the curtain
 “ Of our frail body, is most certain :
 “ Nerves—so many that none can write ’em—
 “ Arteries and veins *ad infinitum*—
 “ At least, beyond the power of man
 “ To count or tell which way they run ;
 “ Ducts and glands, of different kinds,
 “ In every part the student finds ;
 “ Absorbents to prepare the food,
 “ And bear its essence to the blood ;
 “ Muscles protect each tender part,
 “ And these again the bones support,
 “ Affording such extensive motion,
 “ As any one may form a notion,
 “ By giving but a cursory look
 “ At Barclay’s deep and learned book—
 “ That all these parts have each their station,
 “ Varying in no age or nation,
 “ It must be granted :—And ’tis said
 “ There is a structure in the head,
 “ More wonderful than all :—that yields
 “ Vital support,—that sleepless, wields
 “ A sort of sceptre o’er the rest :
 “ And this contributes, ’tis confess,

- “ To regulate a ceaseless motion,
- “ Kept up without the least commotion,
- “ Through all our trials, hopes, and fears,
- “ For upwards of a hundred years.
- “ All this is granted ; but what need
- “ To follow, when you’ve books to read,
- “ A shocking damnable invention,
- “ No matter what may be th’ intention ?
- “ All may be easily learnt by rote
- “ From what departed sinners wrote,
- “ And if you still are over nice,
- “ Nothing is like a little PRACTICE.”

These are arguments of weight,
 And certainly might move the state
 To grant a total prohibition
 To all such bloody exhibition.
 Perhaps these Patrons may be right ;
 Certes, *I* ought no more to fight
 Against opinions so high sounding,
 ‘Pon honour they are quite astounding !
 Howe’er my thought (if I *may* mix it
 With such a powerful *ipse dixit*)
 Is, that should ever harm befall
 Our liberal Patrons, great or small,—
 If ever they should feel the torture
 Of a right good compound fracture,—
 If they ever pant for breath,
 Gnash their teeth, or call on death,
 When rack’d with gout, or stone, or gravel,—
 Then, will be the time t’ unravel

All their plots, and bring them down,
 To reverence the Doctor's gown,
 And beg th' assistance of his knife
 To save a *valuable* life.
 God grant howe'er they be sincere,
 And that they truly cannot bear
 Such barb'rous mode of studying physic:—
 If not, may they be worse than sea-sick;
 Rack'd till they of life be weary,
 And only find, one learn'd in *theory*,
 Taught after their peculiar plan,
 To try to free them from their pain.
 Error in judgment has its pardon;
 Hypocrisy, severer guerdon.

Shame on such contest! where's the pride
 That should in every breast reside,
 To be the guardians of learning!
 With noble indignation burning,
 Some among ye, show your spirit,
 If from your fathers, ye inherit
 Aught of their virtue!—Stand aloof!
 Ye that are uncorrupt!—Give proof
 Ye are not yet to virtue dead,
 That Drummond's glory is not fled.
 Oh! let it not for shame be told
 Ye sunk Edina's fame—Be bold,
 And nobly struggle with the tide;
 Yours is the INFAMY or PRIDE!

